

Marketing Intelligence 2 – Tools and techniques

It's all about helping other people achieve their objectives.

Let's start from the premise that the more you know about your audience, the more targeted you can make your message.

Unless you want to spend all day on the phone interviewing people, or indeed to pay someone to do that for you, you need to find an effective way to glean information from your prospect or client base.

Here we take a look at what we believe are the most intelligent and cost effective approaches.

Regular informative e-communications

These are most often called newsletters. Beware though, in most cases, your customers and to an even greater extent your prospects, don't really care too much that "Sally in your accounts department has had a baby", "that Chris from engineering is training for the London Marathon" or that "Ernest from the warehouse retires next week". Nice though it is, if you're reading this, you'll know that people are bombarded with information all day. Anything that doesn't help them achieve their objectives is going to get short shrift.

Building a regular dialogue with your audience is key. If what you send is informative and useful, they'll read it. If they like what they read, they'll tell you and over time will come to see you as a provider of useful products and services that can help them achieve their objectives.

These regular communications provide you with an ongoing marketing platform or foundation, from which you can glean intelligence and launch more penetrative initiatives. It keeps you and your company top of mind and, if constructed properly, using the right tools, will provide you with a wealth of intelligence and feedback.

Combine this approach with a clean and up to date database and you have a very powerful marketing tool.

Consider the following example:

Your company has three services, we'll call them A, B and C. Each month you send out an eNewsletter and focus on these three services. Using the right eMarketing tools, you'll be able to tell from month one, where people's interests lie, service A, B or C. Spread that analysis out over a series of eNewsletters and you can ratify and refine that analysis.

Even better, if you've segmented your database first, perhaps by "line of business", you'll be able to glean an even greater level of detail. So, we could tell for example that *Accountants* favoured *service A* and *IT Companies* favoured *service B*.

We may also learn that no-one is interested in service C. Fantastic! There's a potential to save 33% of your marketing budget and spend it where you now know you will see a return (service A and B).

Alternatively, it will allow you to re-evaluate your proposition for service C. The bottom line is, at least you'll know!

This level of intelligence moves you one step closer to understanding your prospect's concerns and of course helps you to devise a way by which you may help *them* meet *their* objectives.

The "services" we use in this example could just as well be your company's "products", industry "issues", membership "opinions" or customer "requirements".

Of course, knowing what people are interested in then allows you to target much more accurately.

See how you can refine the process by taking the final Step 3.

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